

NEW LOOK * WATER ABSORBENT

Tokyo Fan

**GAMES
MOVIES
ANIME
STUFF**

ISSUE 2

**STAR
WARS**
**SPECIAL EDITIONS
IN DETAIL**

**FREE PUMP-ACTION
DART GUN!**

**RAGE RACER
DARK SAVIOR
SOUL BLADE**

**THE
LOST
WORLD**

**RETRO
GAMES**



Produced by SUNTEAM

Editor
and
Writer

Paul Walker



This fanzine is produced by fans for fans. We have no wish to infringe on the rights of the copyright holders of the material contained within. All pictures and text is copyright their original authors and/or companies. No reproductions without prior permission except for the purposes of comment or review.

Fortune comes to those who wait.

Japanese Wisdom

Writer Credits
Probably this month you can find me on your train, after getting home, progressing dramatically from the steps of bloody, cinematic graphics and moving camera (although some of the latter are still the best.)

Artwork Credits
Artwork produced in technology is the word used for animation from Japan. It is aimed at an older audience than western animation, and only, as best, the three with the three that Hollywood can provide. Manga is the word for Japanese comics, which are very common in the country. They are usually for bigger, and a bit more adult than western readers. And you'll find it in comic books, manga, although a few graphic novels. Also made in mass UK bookshops.

From 1 of Tokyo Fan in last month, October 1996. The writer, and a change in general writer to the way in Paul Walker, for

Cost: £1.50 per issue, including ship. Orders sent to usual mailing list.

CONTENTS

3

RAMEN TODAY

My Peach eats ramen in modern video entertainment.

5

STAR WARS SPECIAL EDITING

We got the reviewers out and gave 'em to bits.

8

GAME REVIEWS

Age of Empires, Dark Sector and Soul Blade scrutinised.

13

NAME PROMPTS

What's coming up, we give them all a run round the block.

14

ON THE PAGE

Star Wars Characters and George Lucas' Shadow Moon

16

HOLLYWOOD OF 1997

Another shameless attempt inspired.

17

ON THE SCREEN

Exemplar, Phoenix Plan, Unreal Yatsuro and First Contact LD.

19

BY THE MOVIES

Are the big name movies living up to their promises?

20

ADVICE REVIEWS

Listen in to Please Save My Earth, Record Of Lodoss War and FF VI

21

RETRO GAMING

Star Wars, Star Wars and other fond memories await.

EDITORIAL

HELP ME OH WAN KENO!

Well this issue's a bit less out to I've missed the big Star Wars rush. But to me, the Star Wars films are never out of fashion so that's the theme of this issue. I was going to do a bit about Star Wars merchandise - the figures and stuff, but I ran out of room. Maybe next time oh!

Of course, on the PC front, things are looking up for the last of the trilogy. With Jedi Knight promising to be the best Doom game since the last one, and Star Wars Supremacy (previously called Rebellion) to easily strategy game fanatics what more could you possibly want? Well, maybe a decent ground combat sim, where you control Scout Walkers and the like. Now that would be fun!

YOU CAN'T PARK HERE

There are a several things that you'll never find in this fanzine, and here's why:

1. Nintendo 64 stuff. Because I haven't got one.
2. Reviews of football games. Because I can't watch them.
3. Needless space filters. No, honest.
4. Instructions for teletypes. Ask Douglas Adams.
5. A blank cheque

OH, WHAT A BARGAIN

I've just been to see Jackie Chan's latest movie Rumble in the Bronx. I must say that out of all the big name Hollywood blockbusters this year like The Lost World and Batman And Robin, none of them were as enjoyable as Rumble.

For many years I've been a big fan of the master of Kung-Fu comedy but I felt that his more recent films have never quite matched up to the classics like Police Story and Project A. Rumble in the Bronx changes this. It's one of the best films he's made in ages and it's a sheer joy to watch. It's hilariously funny at times, without the usual cheesiness of Hong Kong film and Jackie has really gone all-out to show Western audiences what he's all about.

It amazes me how often to many films, he can still find more and more original ways of fighting - his skill at using everyday objects in a fight really show him off, his stunts are still amazing, and there's even a special effect in sight.

Do yourself a big favour and go and see it.

OOOH

And anyone who can tell me what the last three heading were from went a free mountain in next issue. Aren't I good to you!

Paul Walker, Editor



MR PEACH ON GAMES TODAY



In an effort to encourage public debate, Mr Peach says some things that you may find offensive (or just plain dumb).

There are many people who would say that games today are just not a patch on what they used to be.

These people aren't always talking about the old days of the Spectrum and Commodore 64, but the PC Engine, Megadrive and Super Famicom (SNES): the most recent consoles before the 'Next Generation' 32-bit big boys.

I can't honestly say that I'd anorexia diet with them.

Of course, even now and casual gamers today would say that this was a load of old cobblers. After all, how can an ageing sprite-based affair be as



PC-Alen stars' originality in platform gaming!

inviting as the zero-shade-art polygon experience of today? Well that is missing the point entirely. It isn't the technical side that was better - it was the emotional side.

The easy way to explain this is to drag up the 'Good Old Days' syndrome as an excuse and say that it's human nature to be overly nostalgic and critical of the present, and to be fair it's possibly true. But even so, I feel that some of the

points in this article are valid enough to be worth further consideration.

From my own personal experience, the premature death of the import-only PC Engine signalled the long gaming winter that was to follow. But what am I saying? That the PlayStation, Saturn and N64 are poor machines? On the contrary, I think

that they are all very fine machines, with some excellent and high quality games. But it seems that the elements that made the earlier games so great are now few and far between. This is partly due to the developers themselves, and partly due to the hardware.

To me, it feels as

if a whole generation of games consoles has been released out. For example, the 16-bit machines could in no way achieve a perfect arcade conversion of something like Power Drift, or even a much underrated classic, Alen Stars. But now the 32-biters are here, these games are considered to primitive and out of date by most people. There are a host of polygon-less coin-ops out there that could now be converted without

trouble, but it's just too late.

In fact, when the 32-bits first came out, the games I looked out for most were the 16-bit style, that I know and still love today.

Another regret I have about the current machines is the use of FMV for intro. Now a console can display any amount of footage with FMV, I find myself rarely impressed. With the previous consoles, you were wowed as the most skillfully programmed intro blew you away. There are exceptions of course, like Soul Blade and Tekken 2, but the same sense of awe is no longer there.

In a way, I feel that the hardware has become almost too good. You rarely gasp with amazement as a screen high sprite leaps into play, wondering how they got away without a hint of flicker or clash. Machines now can handle enough polygons that you aren't often truly impressed by what you see, from a technical perspective at least.

There is also the problem of the software in general. In the last few years, what once were magical places of endless enjoyment and free-flowing cash, arcades are now just dead boring. Oh, a driving game. Oh, a fighting game. Oh, another etc... Most of the genres that made gaming so fun have either vanished entirely, or become distorted freaks of their former selves, and this has looked into home gaming too. Sometimes, I just



Golden Axe kept me playing for years! I still go back to it now and again.



New Zealand Story: And that's what fun

want to build up a copy of something like Wonderboy on the Master System and about "Look, guys! This is a good game!"

Gaming has become a quite-fine hobby. Most big name games are geared at play in short bursts, rather than hours on end. Save positions are more frequent than ever, and games that you can really get your teeth into are not abundant enough. Tomb Raider is a fine example of what we need more of.

The change in trends against 3D games can be partly attributed to the gaming press. With the launch of these "next generation" consoles, the magazines were waiting for games that made these machines stand out from the previous bunch. Something that "could never be done before." So developers are now far more wary of doing anything that, say, a Magazine, albeit with worse audio and visuals, could handle.

There are other gaming elements that are now frowned on by the magazines, that don't need to be said as all. Linear gameplay is one thing they're always moaning about. While freedom is good, there is a lot to be said for the level-maker-level routine, that gives you a definite purpose and a goal, with no worries that you may miss anything on the way.

Also, originality is held to be one of the

most important things a game must have. I agree, but I think that developers sometimes take this a little too literally. Lack of originality has forced most software houses to pass by the old faithful 2D shoot 'em up and platform games. They are considered unoriginal and dated. But it is not the genres that



Originally with *Parodius*, Parodius was one of the best shoot 'em ups around as it's done, and it's offering are still going strong today.

are lacking. It is the imagination behind the games themselves. All you need is enough exciting and clever ideas within the games and you've got a game that's a joy to play.

Give me a pad of paper and a team of programmers and I'll rule the world. Thankfully, companies like Capcom realize that there are just some elements of 2D play that can't be successfully translated to 3D. Look at Crash Bandicoot. Lovely graphics, but the three dimensions make it a chore to play rather than a pleasure. The skill involved in a good 3D platformer is different, and it would be a shame if these games vanished for ever.

Another thing that GTC's my goal in this obsession with realism. Are Sonic, Mario or Parodius realists? In Our Run! No, but it's just damn fun. Give me that over Sega Rally any day (and Sega Rally is a decent enough game in its 16). Mechwarrior? Sure, it fun for a while, but the tedious moaning about for hours soon gets a bit tedious.

Not everything I've said here is perfectly far. In fact, some of it is probably, with a second thought, a little untrue. But now and again you have to have a jolly good rant.

Software companies should produce more games of the old school, just make sure that there well designed to begin with and they can't go wrong.

Thankyou for listening.

JAPAN'S TOP FIVE GAMES

1. Final Fantasy 7 (PlayStation)
2. IQ - Intelligent Qube (PlayStation)
3. Parapa Rapper (PlayStation)
4. Pocket Monster (Game Boy)
5. Blast Dancer (Nintendo 64)



STAR WARS CAST UPDATE

Castings continues on the Star Wars prequels, but here is the latest list, straight from the web site.

Starwars.com. Check it out!
 Ewan McGregor - Obi Wan Kenobi
 Liam Neeson - A Jedi Knight
 Natalie Portman - The Young Queen
 Keith Lloyd (The kid in Jingle All the Way) - Anakin Skywalker
 Ian McDiarmid (The Emperor in Jedi) - Emperor Palpatine
 Terrence Stamp (General Zod in Superman II) - ?

NEW IN JAPAN

All the latest releases from the East.

GAMES

King of Fighters '96 (PlayStation - SNK)
 Danian Pack Plus (Saturn - Konami)
 Final Fantasy Tactics (PlayStation - Square)
 Baby Universe (PlayStation - Sony)

VIDEOS

Kay The Metal Idol Vol. 15
 Konami All Star Fests '97
 City Hunter Special - Goodbye My Sweetheart
 Cyber Marines II Act 6

COMPACT DISCS

Evangelion: Death
 Stayers - Try Treasury
 Shinnick: Princess Vol. 1
 Power Dolls Vol. 1 - Wedding March
 Jungle Debut 2

COMICS

Dragon Quest - 21
 Complex 193 - 4
 Apple - 3
 Shadow Run - 3
 Fire Emblem - 9

STAR WARS

TRILOGY SPECIAL EDITIONS

TOKYO FAN presents the ultimate, most comprehensive and definitive opinions on the biggest movie event since, well...Star Wars.

I'm writing this article as a long time crazy fan of the Star Wars movies. I've seen the movies countless times, got the books, soundtracks and enough merchandise to keep me happy.

I must admit that I'm a bit of a purist when it comes to sharing movies. But even so, I was just about as excited as you can get when I first got wind of the Special Editions. Now they are here in all their Big Screen glory, it's time to see whether the promise lives up to the reality.

I've split up each film into the bad and good bits, and how I think they've improved or have suffered. I also mention some of the missed opportunities which really **SHOULD** have been dealt with.

STAR WARS - A NEW HOPE - SPECIAL EDITION -

When A New Hope first came out it had almost no publicity whatsoever. Quite the reverse now, of course, and much has been made of the changes. Yet another detailed description of the Jabba scene etc etc is unnecessary so I'll get straight down to the nitty gritty.

GOOD BITS

Nice bits of sky on Tatooine.

Quite subtle but very attractive, like the clouds above the R2 canyon, and the blue starry sky by the Sandcrawler, where it used to be stars.

Not Only & Dweebies

What can I say? A superb and very lengthy series of shots that show off the city for what it really is. Nice to see the droids and swamp bikes from Shadows Of The Empire giving a bit of controversy. Good looking droid thing, and sweet swishing CG Dweebies. And the Falcon blowing off! What more could you want?

Jabba

The most famous new scene, and a

lovely and important addition, especially with Boba Fett looking on. What a stud!

Han and the Stormtroopers

Unsurpassed and very funny is the scene where Han chases the Stormtroopers around a corner in the Death Star - now coming back to life with a whole squad! This bit works perfectly and feels as though it had been intended from the start.

The Fuel Tanks

From the Falcon's arrival on Yavin's moon, there is so much new footage that it's hard keep up with it all. The new shots add greatly to the battle, and are added seamlessly to the previous footage, keeping much of the same style of the original. Oh, and when the Death Star blows up, you get a vertical shock wave from it.

Toy! Oh what have you done!

On reflection, and after having seen it a few more times, it's not quite that bad. But what was wrong with the old shot? It was far less readily and moved with more weight to it. Please, Lucas, if this ever comes out on video, drop this bit.



The new like Only including confused space cruiser

The Storm that walks in front of the camera for a bit too long. The Storm walks in front of the camera for a bit too long.

Greedo shoots Han first

My first gripe with this is that Han's classic line "Yes, I bet you have!" is cut short to "I bet you have!" WHY?

Secondly, I have to agree with what some 'Haters' have been saying about "needlessly softening Han's actions." Han is what he is, a smuggler and an expert in self-preservation. He hasn't stayed alive this long by letting someone get a shot in first.

Lucas apparently changed this shot so that Han didn't kill in cold blood, and said that this was intended all along. But by doing this, an important part of Han's character development from film to film is stripped away. Unnecessary tampering.

SPECIAL EDITION 12

Luke and friends

One major scene which has been clamouring to be put back into the movie is where Luke spots the space battle above Tatooine and shoots off to



Filling the over Sandcrawler desert sequence.

BAD BITS

The new shot of the Jawa's Sandcrawler coming over the ridge.

When I first saw this 'upgraded' sequence my previous good mood took an immediate slump. What's this? My bleedin' Haters! Machine Sandcrawler looks more realistic than this Tonka.

tell his friends at the Anshobond power station. This scene, I think, is vastly more important to the jobbs meeting, as it gives a background on Luke's situation and why he is so keen to leave. Also it introduces Eiggs and gives more meat meaning to his death than the extra scene on Tatooine.

The Cantina

Every Star Wars buff knows that Lucas was never happy with the Cantina scene. So what do they do? Add two more rubbery masks with very little animation (actually, it was the same mask, but from different directions). I was expecting some major digital overkill, with faces frowning, smiling and just moving about a bit more. How hard can it be?

Lightboxes

Why oh why, when spending so much money on the new scenes, could they not fix up such a simple problem such as the lightboxes?

Point 1: When Ben Kenobi's astromech is pointed directly at the camera during the duel, it looks like a fading room.
Point 2: After Kenobi's death, Vader walks towards the closing blast doors - his lightbox is where where the STILL have forgotten to colour it.

Point 3: They could have at least made some of the astromechs 'sneezed' as they should instead of just popping on.

Who's that man?

One of the bigger goals in Star Wars is the scene where they've just blasted off from Mos Eisley, and they've all strapped themselves in. You get a shot of Han in the cockpit and on his left, green from the surrounding lights is

to make up for any shortcomings, and being able to see it on the big screen is a blessing. I'm just not sure that this can be called the 'definitive' Star Wars.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK - SPECIAL EDITION -

To me, Empire is not only the best of the Star Wars movies, it is also probably the finest movie EVER made, thanks to some beautiful scenery, a dramatic storyline and the most rousing film score ever written. For me to really enjoy it, my alterations had to be perfect.

GOOD BITS

Wampa

When Luke is in the Wampa cave, you never see much of it, except at close range. Now there are several shots of it, chewing away at Luke's Taun Taun, and howling when it's anger has popped off. It's cut so well that you'll believe it hadn't been changed at all.

Chasing the Falcon

Slave 1 fans are in for a treat here. After the Falcon sets off to Batuu (when the Imperial fleet goes into Hyperspace), there is an extra shot of Poe's ship as it chases down the heroes.

Approach to Cloud City

My God. MY GOD! Coming in to land, the Falcon now flies through a detailed CG Model of Cloud City in all it's glory. It looks so good I nearly wet myself. Also, a quick flythrough is shown, which pans up to Leia screaming around in the window of a new building.

Best of all, and I would never have forgiven them if this hadn't been added, is a Tilted one (as recently designed by Star Wars veteran Ralph McQuarrie), floating in a cloud in the foreground. Simple but brilliant.

Cloud City Interior

Whereas Cloud City was previously levels of enclosed and claustrophobic corridors (just like production paintings), the effects team have really gone to town in opening it up. Every opportunity has been taken in adding windows and open areas in the background, quite subtly at times, to give the expansive feel that was originally intended. One minor

grape though is a dodgy bit of misting where Chewie's fur goes in front of a window, but it's not too bad.

Also new is a corridor and amazing exterior shot when Lando gives the announcement to leave Cloud City.



A CG Falcon looks at Cloud City.

Watch carefully as it's not on for long though.

The Top Hatch

When Lando opens the Falcon's hatch to get to Luke, the prisoners there had a bright white light streaming in. Now, an extra hatch has been added, and a more realistic exterior is in place.

Vader's trip to the Executor

Out of all the new bits in Empire, I was not aware of, or prepared for this major piece of reworking. Vader is now seen walking out to his Lambda-Class Shuttle, which is also seen flying out towards his Super Star Destroyer and Landing in the docking bay. The ramp then lowers and he strides out! Despite this being ripped from Jedi, it's a different angle and doesn't really show, Vader's robot has been redubbed though, and sounds just a little too different to be comfortable (a friend of mine said he was doing a Julian Clary impression!).

CLEAN UP

Thankfully, unlike A New Hope, many of Empire's most beloved effects have been retained. Speeders are no longer transparent, big bloody noise areas are nearly gone (although some remain), and Luke's fire drop down the central chute of Cloud City has been re-done far more realistically. Also, those horrid grey windows when Vader looks out of the Executor's windows are gone for good. The Star Destroyer approaching Hoth is still sea-through though, as is the Falcon when it leaves Hoth.

Also, I noticed a difference in dialogue. When Han is cutting open the Taun Taun, Luke was mumbling a lot more, and when Luke falls down the core of



Cloud City Interior with added windows!

somebody plodding down the passageway? Surely some quick digital work could have fixed the problem.

VERDICT

When I first saw the Special Edition I was in two minds about it. A lot of scenes that needed fixing were untouched, and much that was fine had been tampered with. But the improvements are more than adequate.



Cloud City, he now screams. Whether these are new bits, or were lost in the video versions, I don't know. (A New Hope also has differing sounds and dialogue).

My only big gripe is that the closing of the music when Slave 1 takes off with Han needs to have been locked out, and I feel this takes something away from the drama of the scene.

THE VERDICT

The best film ever is now even better. I couldn't have hoped for anything more. Cloud City now looks as it always should, the extra Winter less an welcome bonus (despite the vocal). This isn't a Special Edition. This IS The Empire Strikes Back.

RETURN OF THE JEDI - SPECIAL EDITION -

As it stands, Jedi has pretty much been left as it is, with the exception of a couple of major scenes.

GOOD BITS

Jabba's food

Yip, gone is the old song and dance routine and in is a new one, complete with dancers, drummers and new footage of Leia falling down into the Rancor pit. The new Ty Nevelles is purely computer generated, and sings along with her Yuzzem partner as a fitting piece of music. I know Lucas always wanted this scene to be more than it was, but I wish it was just a little longer. Also it's a shame to see Lando's hat has been replaced, but the new one will well enough.

Sartha's

Just before Jabba's Sail Barge pans into view, you get a lovely shot of a herd of



Recent prototype sculpture

Sartha's making their way across the desert plain. Also, that horrid stop motion shadow walking across the Sail Barge has been fixed.

Sartha's pit

The Sartha's now has a hole! Presumably from the hole, this bit of CG work changes as people who previously fell into it's mouth.

Death Star explosion

Nothing much different, but it looks a bit better now.

The End

WOW! Gone is the Ewok song. In is a stunning new piece from John Williams. Where the Rebel fireworks light the sky, a whole new scene of celebrations have been added. The camera pans across the roofs of Mos Eisley as a Skywalker shoots overhead, crowds cheering.

before, then on to a gorgeous shot of Rancor, and finally the very first on-screen appearance of Coruscant itself. Note the stormtrooper being chucked around by the crowd and the giant statue of the Emperor being pushed over in the distance. Worth the ticket price in itself.

BAD BITS

Well, two classic songs have been replaced, but I think I can live with that.

CHANCES MISSED

Rancor

Well, the Rancor is as dodgy as ever. It's not just the matte lines, or the fact it looks like a puppet, but the difference in brightness between it and Luke. Surely something could have been done!

The Emperor's 'Bully bit'

Has no-one else noticed this or am I going mad? On several of the close-ups of the Emperor's face (bully bit's on the throne) there is this awful black blob, pinned on the side of his face as the left (on line with his eye). Now I can't begin to fathom why this was there in the first place, but they didn't fix it. It sticks out so obviously that it couldn't be more obvious if there was a neon flashing sign above it saying 'Look here!'. Argh, it makes me cringe!

THE VERDICT

Well, it's as good as ever, even with some of the faults still there. I am pleased. And they're out on video in August. (Don't know if this is the UK release date though. Probably not).

THE FOUR MOST ANNOYING THINGS THAT CAN, AND ALWAYS DO, HAPPEN AT THE CINEMA

1. THE CHAIR TICKERS

You've just sat down, picked at your undergarments, shuffled around and finally got yourself comfy. The lights dim, the film starts. WHUMP! You're tempted to turn, but think better of it. After all, it must have been an accident. WHUMP! Yes, it's the chair tickers come to get you! But worse than the one's that do it deliberately are those people with unusually long legs, that knee put in the back as they try to settle down. They don't realise that the impact on your seat feels like there's a couple of stones being behind you. But you put up with it. You suffer, and...

2. THE SMELL

Oh, not some strongly identifiable bodily smell. This is the warm smell, a mix of strawberry and popcorn, but still is though it's already been through the respiratory system of the entire audience. And unlike a bodily smell, this one does not gently disappear. No, it wafts across every couple of minutes. Your entire mind is now focused away from the movie, and you're counting the seconds until the smell arrives again. But even now, you can hear something...

3. THE SOUND

Two rows back and four people to your left, someone is eating popcorn. Not like any human being eats, but more like the rhythmic munching of a cow. CHAK CHAK, chakchakchak, CHAK CHAK, chakchakchak. On and on you go, never ending. CHAK CHAK, chakchakchak. You could handle it if only the perpetrator wasn't positioned so precisely that the sound ONLY enters into your left ear. It's like being partially deaf, the agony making you turn your WHUMP! Oh, there again. The frustration is slowly building up inside. You missed the last five minutes of dialogue and wonder what's going on on screen. Is it getting hot in here?

4. THE STAG

You get the impression that the doors have opened behind you. A few seconds later the seats begin to wobble. You turn and see a Stag of the Dump incarnate. But this Stag has his eyes on the seat next to yours. He shuffles along with an apple-like gait, fully over his eyes. And out next to you. Then he goes out his popcorn. CHAK CHAK, chakchakchak, And there's that smell. Your skin is crawling, trying to manoeuvre itself over the opposite side of your body. He utters, slowly, gracefully, you pass out.



game

REVIEWS

RAGE RACER

It may be someone who is always ranting about the constant stream of driving games on console, but there are some that make it all worthwhile. The big question - is *Rage Racer* one of these games? Let's start at the beginning... ah?

The FMV more sequence is very, very classy indeed. Mamco are becoming experts at it which bodes well for the

selecting Grand Prix you get yet another series of episodes, similar to Ridge Racer, but far more involved.

Firstly, there is the usual car shop, where you can choose from a variety of models. You can also tune up your current model to increase its performance if a brand new vehicle is out of your budget. For the picky people you can also change the colour of your car and best of all, the name and design on the front. This is achieved by either choosing from a selection of preset backgrounds and foreground images, or manually drawing your own! The mini art package is very rudimentary though, with nothing so advanced as a fill command. And using a joystick to draw makes it especially difficult, so to create anything approaching acceptable, you'll need a lot of patience and time. But it's worth the effort in the end - your design will also appear on a roadside sign on track 2 so look out for it.

Low carbon transportation now sells cover it



I bet Marco never thought to see Boris the Molehead in one of these places!

main track. As with the previous Ridge Racer games, these are all part of one main track, with diversions taking you to the relevant area. When you've got these sorted out, you go up a class where no competition occurs.

With each race that you win placing first, second or third, you gain some cash. This is vital for overall success as you need to scoop up or trade in your vehicle to get elsewhere in the chosen conquest.

The gameplay of Ridge Racer is naturally very similar to that of Ridge Racer and Ridge Racer Revolution. But despite being very familiar with Revolution in particular, I still found this an engaging and utterly enjoyable



Das Institut für gesunde sowie kranke
Lebensweise. Das Institut für die
Lebensweise.

OG movie project sometimes is the future. Anyway, from the title screen, you can access several things: The Grand Prix (the game proper), time attack, Save & Load, Sound Test and Credits (control, volume, etc). After

THE COURSES



Question 1 - Multiple Choice

This is a fairly standard course. Some hills, some tight bends and some sections so small you can't even see.



Figure 2 - Data Data On

The most hilly course of the three. You may find that investing in a car with good acceleration really pays off on this level.



© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 105–111

A bit of everything on this one. Some nasty sharp turns, so learn how to do the power slide! Not as tricky as Ridge Racer Raveknust's third course, *Ironcastle*.



The hero in *Rage Racer* is another triumph for Namco. The CG can move so realistically that you could almost be watching the real thing! It's almost like one of those classy car ads you get on TV. The only thing wrong is the glaring grammatical error: Start your engine's. Better luck next time, Namco.

game to play. The courses are designed very well with some stunning scenery - steep hills, waterfalls and the like. The graphics themselves are a little dim and colorless though - there's nothing like the attractive palm tree areas in *Revolutions*, but I suppose they're just going for realism.

There is still a certain amount of polygon break up in this and it is very noticeable in areas like the tunnels, where the white tracks across the screen almost look like real! There must be some way of cropping this (like putting a black mask in front of the sky background) but they don't seem to

better. Music is really good, in the same style as *Revolutions*, but not quite as enjoyable.

If you already own other Ridge Racer games, then you may be a little apprehensive about getting *Rage Racer* due to it's similarities. If you want another racing game then this is the one to get, it's just as fun to play and not quite as frustrating as you know that even if you don't make 1st, you'll get some money out of it. It is impossible to clearly split this from it's predecessors. They are all superb racing games and deserve to be in your collection.



There are loads of cool bridges to zoom under and over.

INFO BOX FORMAT Play Station MAKER Namco GAME STYLE Driving	GRAPHICS 	GAME PLAY
	DIFFICULTY 	MUSIC
	ACTUALITY 	PLAYABILITY
	AND MORE AT 	SETTING
	STEERING 	

Steering good mixing too, nothing more, nothing less. Worth a look even if you've got the other two.



NEWS FOR HOBBITS UFO DISASTER

Following on from last issue's news on The Hobbit movie, it seems that I was wrong. Peter Jackson is going to be directing live action versions of The Lord Of The Rings! Cripes! Now he! I manage that I don't know! Supposedly, the story will be split over three movies, but with the amount of scary stuff, they'll need at least six! No doubt a lot will be cut out (including, sadly, Tom Bombadil who seems to be cut out of everything), but I still have faith. Now all we need is a decent movie version of War Of The Worlds and I'll be happy.

Did anyone see the Strange but True? UFO debate!

DEBATE! They hardly give either side a chance to murder a word, let alone a full scale debate before cutting in with some pre-filled leucine from earlier in the series!

The telephone survey was interesting though, with 93% of the viewers believing that Extraterrestrial life has already visited Earth. Although most of the viewers were bound to be interested enough in the subject to have watched the programme in the first place, it still is quite a majority. A good sign that the public is beginning to accept the subject as a serious area for research.

Dark savior



In an RPG fan, as it's nice to see a decent adventure released in the UK, even if most of the good stuff is still only available in Japan.

Dark Savior's story revolves around an evil soul-sucking monster called Bilan, who after being captured is caged up, shored on a boat and sent off to Juler's Island, which is one huge prison community. However, during the voyage, Garan (the hero) is woken from a curious dream by storms. Bilan has escaped and is roaming the ship killing everyone! But what is strange is that the dream Garan was having was of Bilan breaking loose and fleeing to Juler's Island. Confused, Garan sets out to stop the monster...

This is about as much as I can say though, as the framework of Dark Savior's gameplay is quite intricate. There is a timer on the first stage (the boat) and depending on how long it takes you to finish the level, you can go

to one of three different stories (or parallels). After these, there are two more parallels to complete, making this a much larger game than it originally appears.

Each parallel contains many of the same locations, and also some unique to that particular story. What really makes it interesting is the attitude and situations around the characters. In one storyline the Warden may be hostile and Bilan towards you, but in the next he could be all smiles and kindness. It is this play on events that really draws you back to the game - a kind of 'what would've happened if' situation. But as well as the differences, Climax have made sure that there is some kind of running theme throughout which allows you a frame of reference for the whole story.

As far as the actual gameplay goes, it's mostly an enjoyable isometric platformer. The reward points are mostly quite fair, although there are a few exceptions. These exceptions are my only major criticism of the game, in particular the castle-in-the-sky level. It can take you ages to jump your way around it but one simple misjudgement and oops! Five minutes of play wasted and you'll have to do it all again. This is utterly frustrating, and to be honest it affects the overall mark. Also, on occasion you are thrown into a situation where jumping becomes more an

The intro sequence is all real-time polygons, and is very slick; in places with some lovely cutscene paper and 2D sprites.



In the small boat, you can board the ship. Hurry!

Hyperlan Perspective

Although Dark Savior is primarily isometric, Climax have added a neat way around their problem of foreground objects obscuring your view of what lies ahead. By pushing certain buttons, or using the analogue pad if you have it, you can move the viewpoint in any direction, spin it or zoom in and out. This last feature is particularly useful when faced with a series of platforms and you should make full use of it before you start leaping around.



Round One: Fight!

Battles are handled in a very unique way for a role-playing game. They're basically one-on-one matches fought over three rounds. Movement is limited to just forward and backwards with a single attack and jump. But by keeping the fire button held down, you can power up a special move that can do a lot more damage. The special moves vary and are independent to each creature.



Ready for action



It's over you, dude



Hehehe! Take that!



Oh, I lost.



Curian looks himself inside a Corbin. Finding himself I wonder where they got the idea for that boss...



The Hyperion Perspective allows the viewing of some quite impressive scenery.

Gotcha!

During a scrap, you may use the words "Capture Command" flash up on screen for a brief moment (usually when an enemy is very low on energy). If you pull off a special move during this time, your foe is "captured" and added to your inventory. In any future fights you have, you can choose to substitute a captured opponent for yourself.

act of faith rather than skill, due to vast areas of wall blocking your view.

From a technical standpoint, the graphics are very nice - well drawn, some nice locations and none of this pre-rendered stuff. The music is very good even if it falls short of outstanding. It's all chip sound and quite impressive for it. There is no rendered intro, but near the end of one of the parallels there is a nice long bit of PPV.

If you like your adventures with a bit of action, or like you action games with a bit of a story then this is well worth the effort.

Pieces of eight!

Throughout the game, you are followed by a blue bird from the Boney Hunter's Agency called Jack. Occasionally he'll give you information but he's mostly there to rescue you whenever you do something stupid like drown or fall or step off a ledge into a bottomless pit below. He does charge money for each rescue though, so be sure you've got some handy. Another bird you will encounter regularly is Kallier, who acts as a contact with the Agency (i.e. lets you save your game).

INFO BOX FORMAT Saturn MAKER Omega GAME STYLE Action RPG	GRAPHICS 3D COMPLEXITY 3 LEGIBILITY 4 ONE MORE GO!	SCORE 15 100% PLAYABILITY 100% OPTIMAL
FOR CONSIDERATION Average borders		

A brilliant and original adventure game, let down only by the frustration felt with some of the nastiest points...

FALCOM RPG PACK ON SATURN!

It is time for Role-Playing fans to rejoice. Falcom, one of the major RPG companies in Japan are going to be releasing a retro collection of their games on the Sega Saturn. This pack will contain the following games, *Pa 1, Pa 2, The Legend Of Xanadu and Dragonslayer - The Legend Of Heroes*. For anyone who loves these games, this is surely one major piece of good news. *Ys I & II* are possibly the finest RPG's ever created, with an amazingly compelling storyline spanning the two games. *Dragonslayer* is another brilliant adventure and *Xanadu* is a lesser known (over here) but equally important game.

One thing that these games can boast is some of the finest music in videogame history. Speaking from the PC Engine versions, the arrange versions of the songs by Ryo Takanishi (who was also responsible for the music in the online *You're Under Arrest*) are stunning, superb and utterly fantastic. The tunes from the *Ys* games are classic and timeless, and I can only shiver with anticipation at this new collection.

As you may have guessed, I rather like these games, but will this collection get a release in America or the UK? Well, it's hard to tell, but if you know what's good for you then get down on our hands and knees and pray.



SOUL BLADE

You know, games like this really annoy me! There I am, musing and grousing at how there are why not many better 'em ups on console and how it's getting tedious and boring then WHAM! Along comes one that is so good that I can't help but praise it, encouraging the software companies to make more, it's a vicious and never ending spiral.

Soul Blade is different from your standard Tekken-style brawlers in the way that each character is blessed with a weapon to attack with and defend against their opponent's attacks. As well as your energy bar, you also have a weapon energy; this means you can use your weapon to block, the more energy is taken off until it is

broken and, basically, you're knocked out. Unlike most brawlers, blocking in *Soul Blade* is activated by pressing a button, rather than increasing and this takes a little getting used to. Once you've mastered it, the combination of attack-attack-block comes in very handy.

This really is a stunning conversion. The graphics are totally fantastic, with some gorgeous lighting effects and impressive 3D animated backdrops. There are particularly notable, especially the stages where you are on a raft, drifting on the water down a canyon. Another level has a candle background that as being attacked and slowly collapses as you fight it out! It's touches like these which make the game a joy to

watch as well as play.

The characters are quite interesting, with the right number of bobs and feints, as well as way-out freaks like Volto and his insane attacks.

Music is great too, with BG Ms that are more dramatic and orchestral than those you usually get in a fighting game.

It's not a terribly difficult game in one-player arcade mode, but Namco have done things to increase feasibility.

The Edge Master mode is a smart

little idea - You choose a character and have to progress through a certain number of fights 'situations'. These can be from winning a boat by using only throws to surviving for a set amount of time. After certain fights, you gain a new weapon which you can

choose in your leisure. Mastering up the speed-to-power ratio for the weapons is an important part of the strategy for this mode so it can make all the difference at some point. It's weird though - Edge Master mode can become quite difficult in places and very frustrating, but those of you who relish a good challenge will love it to bits.

I find it difficult to compare *Soul Blade* directly with something like Tekken 2. Tekken has more interest, more characters and more interesting techniques, but *Soul Blade* has massive swords and better gameplay. They are both excellent fighting games and it's down to whether you like bare handed grappling or weapons. Personally, I'm not bothered and I love them both.



The pre-rendered backgrounds are beautiful - and very long too. It's been 'censored' a bit for the UK release though which is a bit of a drag.



Whee! That's gotta hurt!

INFO BOX	GRAPHICS	SOUND
FORMAT PlayStation NAVER Namco GAME STYLE Fighting Game	SEVERALTY LATENCY PRE-RENDERED	QUALITY PLAYABILITY OPTIONS
PAL CONVERSION Soul Blade	Maybe not as involved as Tekken 2, Soul Blade is still a beautifully good look 'em up in the new light.	



game

PREVIEWS

I've been at the latest PlayStation demo disc recently, so I thought I might give you a run down on what some of the latest games could be like. Remember, these are opinions based on demos and not the full products, which could differ.

First up is Sony's *Panache Challenge*. I played an earlier demo of this a while back and wasn't too impressed. But since then things have been improved.

Graphics are very nice - the cars are superbly modelled and the backdrops are well constructed and pleasant enough. It's good to be able to drive through a suburban area as opposed to city streets or a racetrack. Handling is smooth, but maybe a little on the slow side. This may be adjustable in the full version, or might just depend on which car you use.

As far as racing goes, in the demo you're only up against one person, so it gets a bit boring a bit quickly. But everything is there, and competently executed. Most probably one for the driving simulation buffs around.

Next, we turn to *2 Extreme*, the sequel to *ESPN Extreme Games*, one of the earlier racers on the PlayStation. I think I must be one of the only people who



2 Extreme: 2 Crap 4 my taste.

liked the first game. It had lovely graphics, fast gameplay, punch-ups and plenty of courses. Sure, it could be frustrating at times, but if you don't worry about winning, it was great fun.

Something seems to have gone drastically wrong with the sequel. The graphics are drab and basic (the cars are VERY blocky) and on the demo level at least, it's extremely dark (a trend that seems unfortunately to be spreading in PlayStation games). The jumps and gaps seem to have vanished (the player has more to do than avoid potholes) and the odd vehicle. It's just plain boring. You have been warned.

Lifeforce Tanks in Poggonia's attempt to breathe game life back into the Doom genre. It looks like *Alien Trilogy*, but even darker, if that's possible. To me it just doesn't sit right. Sure, it's technically fine, but there's nothing that really grabs you to bother playing this over any other corridor game. One to keep an eye on, but approach with caution.

Monster Trucks is another Poggonia driving sim, with a little more freedom than your average racing game. Because it's all off-road, you can pretty much go anywhere, although it won't win you any races. Graphics are pretty, with some nice lens flare, although this too gets a little dim in places. But the rolling hills combined with lava-filled pits make for an interesting backdrop to the race. It can be tricky to control at first, and I

can see that the appeal may soon die off after the first couple of days.

Sentient is an interesting beast, it's viewed with a Doom-style perspective, but has the gameplay style of a point-and-click adventure. There are a multitude of actions and conversation choices you can use, almost too many in fact, but it could make for an involving game. The graphics are a bit 'dross' at times and in the demo level you have a time limit to achieve your goal. I hope the time is fatter in the real thing, as you've barely got time to talk to people and get used to it all before it's over. It would be a real shame if this pressure to move was in the final version as looking around and conversing with other characters takes a while and is the backbone of a good adventure. Having to rush it takes a bit of the atmosphere away really.

This could well be a nice step forward for adventures, even if all the characters in the game are a bit goaty!



Panache Challenge



Sentient: What a weird looking lot



Monster Trucks: Average Fun



Lifeforce Tanks: Yes, Doom again

D&D ON CONSOLE

Capcom will be releasing a *Dungeons & Dragons* collection CD on both Saturn and PlayStation. I can't say for sure, but what I've heard indicates that the arcade conversion of their scrolling beast 'em up is one of the sides, or at least something very similar. Now when will they get on and do *Allies in Predator*!



on the PAGE

STAR WARS CHRONICLES
By Deborah Fine and Aaron Lee
VINTAGE
£100 + 312 pages + Full Colour

This book really looks the business, and so-one can deny it: Coming in a huge and extravagant cardboard casing, the book slides out as a whopping hardcover with fold-outs, gold text, and lovely glossy pages.

Star Wars Chronicles sets out to be "The most complete and cohesive collection ever assembled of photographs, behind-the-scenes

production stills, early sketches, outlines and more..." and it succeeds quite



admirably, despite the notable lack of Special Edition material.

The book is divided into sections, which I will deal with in part: **THE SAGA'S CONCEPTS**

This "prologue" provides some very interesting information on the Star Wars universe.

The Galaxy's Structure shows the positions of the various areas of the galaxy from The Core Worlds to the Outer Rim Territories, and gives a brief description of each. Next comes a timeline which dates the events leading up to A New Hope (i.e. Han's birth, Clone Wars and etc.). Following this is a section from *The Journal of the Whills*, which describes the rise of the Empire over the Old Republic, and will be the theme of the new prequel movies.

Next up comes technical information, star systems, distances, and notes on the

Han Solo and Lands trilogy novels.

Now comes the good bit. Fiddling out from the centre, there are several pages of photos of ships and people, printed to scale with each other! Ever wanted to know how the Death Star compares with Cloud City? Or how big the asteroid monster is compared to Vader's Super Star Destroyer? It's all here.

STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE

Starting with a rundown of the story so far, what follows is a multitude of photos, stills and designs that it's difficult to take it all in. Every ship and major character is covered in remarkable depth, in an average of 1-3 pages each, detailing prototype models, sophisticated wires etc.

There is a special section purely for the Cantina scene, which shows photos of every creature designed, some even I don't recognise! Also, then fans will delight at the close-up of the

models on the Hologram that is played on the Falcon.

At the end of this, and the subsequent chapters on the movies, is a complete timeline of the movie's development, from original idea to the opening of theatres, including special notes and a list of deleted scenes with some pretty exclusive pictures (like the Power Station at Anchorhead).

STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL

It's extremely difficult to track this down as it's never been released on video, so this little section is a real treat. It contains photos of Chewie's family, a McQuinn painting of a Wookiee home, new film masks and clips of the new cartoon that first featured Boba Fett. Speaking of which, we have here



Leia (Director Richard Marquand) and Producer Robert Watts in charge of an A-101 (The one Chewie and Han's jacket)

SIX PAGES of photos of the Boba Fett costume in various stages of design, and from every angle imaginable, including a shot of all the individual parts. This is a Fett fan's dream come true.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Again, countless photos, early Tatooine models, shots of the asteroid interior model, the Emperor (played by an old woman in great make-up) and nine, but not enough pics of the bounty hunters. Slave 1 is given the full treatment and some of the new ILM techniques (like Go-Motion) are given a run-through.



One of the relaxing scenes on Tatooine from Star Wars: A New Hope

RETURN OF THE JEDI

Jabba's Palace scene are detailed in the same way as the Cantina section, and there is a section entitled *Obi-Wan's Confession* which expands slightly on Ben's responsibility for Vader. Also interesting is a photo that shows the plays of the AT-AT are Director Richard Marquand and Producer Robert Watts, and a break down of the components of Vader's mask. Mentioned in the scenes



With much and more.

cut are the sandstorms on Tatooine and Vader's choking of an Imperial Guard.
THE SAGA CONTINUES

This section goes beyond the movies, covering the two Ewok films, the Star Tours info and the books and comics that have followed (shown chronologically).



Making the Death Star for Jell

Overall, this is a tremendous book for the Star Wars fanatic. It's beautifully presented, and very high quality although I feel that the text could have been more interesting and expanded upon. However, if you've already got The Star Wars Archives and are desperate for more comprehensive references then it is ideal. Of course it is very expensive, and out of the budget range of many people, but for the dedicated Star Wars fan, this is really something you cannot afford to be without.

SHADOW MOON
 By George Lucas and Chris Claremont
BANTAM BOOKS
 £4.99 paperback * 462 pages

I find it a little odd that the cover information of this book is no way states that this is a continuation of the story led down Leia's fantasy movie Willow. It's that is exactly what it is. Thirteen years have gone by since the demise of the movie, where Willow destroyed the evil Queen Bavmorda. Ewra Darian stayed in the city of Tir Asleen, with Madnarigga and Sorbia to care for her. But unexpectedly, the city was destroyed - a giant plague wiped clean through the surrounding mountainside. Only Ewra survived. The book starts, after an extraordinary

chapter, with Willow (taking the name Thorn Druvnheller) arriving at the site of Tir Asleen accompanied by the two witches (my people) Freyja and Reel. Willow-Thorn has made considerable progress in his magical abilities since the movie, and now sports a bearded, weather-beaten look.

After some obscure, serious activities, he encounters a pack of Death Dogs and a Daidel (journalist-dad)

guy called Geryn Harfield. After a quick scrap, Thorn joins Geryn on the road, a journey which eventually leads to Ewra, now a spoiled little brat, as she reaches the City of Ascension. But strange forces are at work, in the guise of someone or something that looks almost exactly like Willow, who has stole his true name and form.

It's not best about the book, this book is not an easy read. It takes a fair bit of concentration to keep track of what's going on and is the verbal equivalent of a very dense piece of coconut cake. The descriptions of Thorn's perceptions can sometimes be overly complex and confusing, and it does take a while for events to move from one point to the next, with some scenes being drastically over-written. Also, quite unlike the

movie, it's quite a grim tale. Nothing but morbidity and almost-death, with very little to lighten the mood.

But saying that, if you're a fan of the movie and want to delve a bit deeper into the world of Willow, then it does have it's staying power. Even though Madnarigga and Sorbia are no longer a part of the story, it is interesting enough to follow Thorn himself. Just don't expect the same feel as the film.



US GOVERNMENT 'EXPLAINS' ROSWELL ALIENS

Fifty years ago, on a rancher's place of land several miles from Roswell, New Mexico, something crashed. The following morning, the US Air Force issued a statement that the remains of a flying saucer had been recovered. Promptly, this statement was retracted and the 'weather balloon' explanation was given in it's place.

Years of investigation have followed, and the now famous Roswell story refuses to lie laid to rest. Despite ludicrous tales like the supposed 'Alien Autopsy' (hoax), there has been a core element of fact unearthed about the events, along with corresponding statements from many witnesses that are trustworthy and strong.

In July 1997, another statement was given by the Air Force. Apparently the bodies recovered at the crash site were not alien beings, but sex dummies used in Project Mogul. It has taken them fifty years to think that one up. Impressed!

To me, the statement is so ridiculously unbelievable that it seems that they are deliberately trying to draw the public's attention back to the Roswell incident. But why? Do they want to gauge public opinion? Are they getting us ready for some earth-shattering event as the millennium looms upon us? After years of denying everything, why come out with this information now, when they could just as well not bothered? The UFO phenomenon seems to be reaching an all time public awareness high, and it's not just down to the X-Files. Think about it.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



Test dummy



Alien Being



FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD RIP-OFFS no.2

Last time, we exposed Free Willy's more than passing similarity to a Japanese animated movie. But now, we have something that is such an utterly shameless copy that it almost defies belief! Yes, I'm talking about ageing action movie *Tango & Cash*. When I went to see this in the cinema all those years ago, I was already a fan of Hong Kong Kung Fu genius Jackie Chan and his movies. But when the opening scene played itself out, I became deathly cold as the blatant unoriginality before my eyes. It was almost an action-by-action rip-off (seen down to some camera angles) as a scene in *Police Story* (like at the start of the movie) which was made several years before and was available on video by this time. In fact, there's only one (minor) difference in the whole scene. I heard once that this was a homage to Jackie, but anyone with an ounce of respect for his movies would not steal his ideas and parade them as their own.

POLICE STORY



The bad guys are approaching in a large vehicle (bus).

Lower hero stops passer-by's car to block the road ahead.

Hero stands in front of car.



View from behind showing vehicle approaching on left hand side of the screen.



Hero pulls out gun and empties it in a nice close-up for the camera.



Hero reloads gun, then spins the barrel as he flicks it shut.



A big visual point is made of the Hero taking careful aim.

Hero fires a shot into the air to spook the bad guys.



A quick steal of the driver's panic, followed by a foot-on-brake shot. The vehicle slows to a halt just in front of the hero, sending the villains flying out of the front windows onto the ground.

TANGO & CASH



The bad guys are approaching in a large vehicle (junkie).

Lower hero stops his own car to block the road ahead.

Hero stands in front of car.



View from behind showing vehicle approaching on left hand side of the screen.



Hero pulls out gun and empties it in a nice close-up for the camera.



Hero reloads gun, then spins the barrel as he flicks it shut.



A big visual point is made of the Hero taking careful aim.

Hero fires 3 shots at the vehicle to spook the bad guys.



A quick steal of the driver's panic, followed by a foot-on-brake shot. The vehicle slows to a halt just in front of the hero, sending the villains flying out of the front windows onto the ground.



on the

SCREEN

NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Released on video by A.D. Vision

Tape 1 - 48 mins
Tape 2 - 48 mins

This is a big name anime in Japan. It

is the first anime series in a long while by Gainax, the team behind classics like G Gundam and Neo. The setting, as near, is the near future - giant walking beings known as Angels are threatening the Earth and NERV, a special government agency is the only defence against them. They have developed massive bio-mechanical humanoid called Evangelions, controlled by young men and women, which are designed to take on the Angels in vicious hand-to-hand combat. No-one knows anything about these mysterious Angels, and stranger still is the fact that the only people who are able to 'interface' and control the Evangelions are those born nine months after a meteor impact that destroyed half of humanity.

Shinji Ikari is one of these people. The shy son of the Evangelion project leader, but with no love for his father, he is thrust into the responsibility of defending the planet. He finds himself helpless at the controls until suddenly... Sorry, but I'm not telling. You'll have to see it for yourself.

I can see many parallels between this and Gainax' masterpiece G Gundam. An emotionally volatile teenager is pushed into a position of responsibility that they're not sure they can handle. Giant robots. Saving the Earth from a repulsive alien foe etc.

But even though G Gundam is by far the superior story, Evangelion is no slouch itself. The first tape is little more than an introduction with a (slightly) boring ending that leaves you asking for more. The second tape goes more into the story, deepening the



mystery and developing character. The animation is very good throughout, although it does lack many of those little extra special touches that are usually apparent in Gainax' work. The dubbing is quite acceptable too, the main characters are more than adequate. Some of the minor roles are as usual, somewhat painful to listen to, especially the 'Gruff Army Type' voices that are way overdone. These first two tapes form the base for what could be a very exciting and intriguing anime series and come highly recommended.

URUSEI YATSURA - TV SERIES II Released by Anime Projects 108 mins

The gang is back in another dose of bizarre humour that only the Japanese could have come up with.

The first episode concerns a rather dim Dracula as he tries to suck the blood from Lani. He goes more than he bargains for when he comes across the Horsehead



family's garlic breath! As he's not one to give up easily, he uses his last companion (or here Lani, Aaru) and Ban to his spooky lodgings. Episode two has Lani travel back in time to teach the young Aaru not to fool around with girls. Her methods are rather unorthodox - she places a doll on Aaru's head that gives him a shock when ever he touches anyone female. Naturally, Aaru flees out and does his best

to put an end to Lani's plan. Next up, Tan's relaxation with a cute flower girl leads to a bitter rivalry as Aaru tries to muscle in. After buying a

plant from her, Aaru tries his best to kill it, giving him the excuse to see the girl again for advice.

Finally, Aaru gets a little wet as he tries to date a beautiful rain spirit that has just moved in across the street.

It's all typical Urusei Yatsura stuff, which means it's very, very funny. I can't really recommend this to the inexperienced anime viewer as it's visually quite old and you need a good understanding of the characters to really enjoy it. If you really want to get in to the wonderful universe of Urusei Yatsura, try movie 1 or 8 first, but if you are already a fan, then this should be on your 'W' list.

MACROSS PLUS PART 4

Released by Manga Video
48 mins

Really, Manga Video have released the first part of this excellent sci-fi series. This tape continues in the same style as



the previous episodes and builds up to an exciting climax as Intoxico pilot Ikuma sets out to destroy the 'Ghost X-9', a planetoid super-samurai. Things really heat up as Ikuma and Giff face off in a desperate aerial battle while the sentient computer personality Sharon Apple captures Miyang and controls the minds of the people of Macross City. It's all brilliantly animated as usual and a fitting end to one of the

better Manga Video releases in recent years (The dubbing in this too, which is a bonus). How when are they going to release Giant Robot?!

STAR TREK - FIRST CONTACT

NTSC Laserdisc release, CLV, 3 sides, 111 mins.

After the decidedly lukewarm affair that was Generations comes the first movie to star only the Next Generation crew.

When news of a Borg attack reaches Captain Picard, he joins the battle in the new-and-improved Enterprise and helps destroy the Borgship. But a small escape craft shoots out and creates a worm to travel back into the past -

their aim is to destroy the launch site of the craft that was the reason for First

Contact between a human and alien race. By doing this, their task of assimilating the Earth will be made so much easier.

Natality Picard and Co. follow them back and eventually meet up with the inventor of the first warp ship. But there is a threat as the Borg infiltrate the Enterprise and begin to assimilate the crew.

Out of all of the Star Trek films, First Contact is easily the most accessible to



both fans and non-fans alike. Director Jonathan Frakes said that to prepare himself, he had sat down and watched movies like *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* and *Alien* so he could 'learn from the best'. And it definitely shows.

It's far more of an action movie than the rest with a good steady pace to the it and a story that doesn't drop into needless

sequences, like the battle on the Enterprise's deflector dish, with the usual high quality effects from ILM and a lovely soundtrack by Star Trek musician Jerry Goldsmith.

Some of the crew members are a little under-used, but this allows the script to keep on track and concentrate on the more important characters. Picard's character is shown in a way that you would never have seen in the TV series, with his vengeful streak coming out as his bottled up hatred for the Borg and what they did to him is released.

The NTSC Laserdisc has no extras unfortunately, but no matter as the picture quality is crystal clear and the THX enhanced sound is a joy to listen to. Really, it doesn't matter is you're a Star Trek fan or not, this is one of the best sci-fi action movies around.

LETTERS PAGE

Oops, well in response to issue 1, I've received almost two letters from my loyal readership. Call it one. Due to reasons of not supplying a name, this person shall remain anonymous.

I think that your favourite Tokyo Fan would benefit if you included a retro anime section where you review older classic Manga video which are still well worth buying. This would be useful for people new to anime who want to know about the films that established Manga in this country, such as *Akira* for example.

Well, that's such a soundingly good idea, I think I'll go one up from it. How about a feature next issue of some of the essential Anime video for beginners? Now don't say I never give you anything.

By the way, issue 3 is out around the last week in October, price £1.90. Details at the front of the mag as usual.

BIG CHANGES AT MANGA VIDEO

According to a report in the August 1997 issue of *Empire* magazine, big things are going down at Manga Video. Marvin Glesher, one of the US Big Boys has started to turn the company upside-down by reducing the price and increasing the running time of their releases. *Demolition Orga* is the first of these new-policy videos with a running time of 154 minutes at only £13.99. While this is no doubt good news for anime fans, will he be doing anything about Manga Video UK's dreadful dubbing? I doubt it.

NEW ADVENTURE GAMES

News on the Saturn



Now on PlayStation in Japan is *Parasite Eve*, by Square. It's an adventure game with some amazing pre-rendered backdrops. It looks like a Resident Evil sort of game, with some massive spooky monsters to shoot. It's one to keep an eye on for.

Also, we have *Virus* by Hudson Soft on Saturn. Being touted as a 'Cyberpunk Adventure Game' it's anime through and through, with some chunky character designs and impressive detail. Judging by Hudson's past record, this will probably be a winner. However, it's not too likely that it will ever reach the UK.

Another vaguely adventureish game for both machines is Takumi's *Chrono Trigger*. It's all anime and it's all girls. Sounds like the perfect combination.

Especially





at the MOVIES

BATMAN AND ROBIN

The first Batman movie was cool. The second was superb. The third was pretty good - nice fresh visuals but a little too comic-like. Now comes *Batman and Robin*.

From the beginning, it sounds like a recipe for success: Hunky George Clooney as the man himself, with Big Arnie as Mr. Freeze. And babes like Alicia Silverstone as Batgirl and Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy. Big ones, tons of action and special effects, nothing can go wrong.

Or can it?

The movie throws you straight in at the deep end. Alfred notifies Batgy of a "new villain" who is terrorizing the city, so off he and his stooge-headed buddy go to kick some serious Arnie butt.

But something feels wrong already. Ten minutes into the big opening action chase, you find yourself beginning to twiddle your thumbs. However, it all turns from bad to worse. Uma's opening scene shows her as an unlikably stereotypical dumb scientist working



Poor Arnie got loads of endless one-liners. Again!

in Swampy whereas Carverman was dealt with intelligently and realistically, this is your plan dumb.

And if that sounds bad, then you have a few surprises yet. The story is at least crap and predictable and at worst, non-existent. Now I'm not someone who usually complains about a thin storyline - after all I loved *Jurassic Park* and *Twister* - but the main driving force in the movie is seriously ill with a disease that only Freeze can cure. Bish bish. How original. Further more, there is a subplot where Ivy uses her charms to turn Batman and Robin against each other. Yawn. Worse than that is the dialogue, which is

uninteresting and serves only to give the characters something to do whenever lights.

It isn't a complete disaster though. Arnie is always watchable in any film (well, almost), and... um, well that's about it. I like DC and I like Clooney but he's a poor choice for Bruce Wayne. He just doesn't have the look. And if you've never seen *Pulp Fiction*, you'd think that Uma Thurman can't act to save her life.

Who can you blame? Well, firstly, Tim Burton for not directing it. Just Schumaker for using the same movie themes as the previous film, and...oh I could go on forever. Just don't watch it, it's crap-OK!

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

If there's any excuse not to see *Batman and Robin* (as if you need another one anyway), then this is it. This is one of the most appealing and interesting sci-fi films

since *Sargen*.

Set, obviously, in the future, the Earth is faced with a strange and enormous ball of energy (or something) floating in space, with one mission - to wipe out everything it encounters. But there is hope in a half-legend that has been passed down through the years to a select few, the "fifth elements," when surrounded by the other four elements a super-weapon that is the only thing that can save mankind.

This fifth element as it turns out, is a young girl, the only survivor from an attacked tribe, and reconstructed to her true form. Showing that she is more than human, she escapes from the lab, leaps off a building (as you do) and goes straight through the roof of two-dressed lovely guy Corbin Dallas (Bruce Willis).

And so it begins, with everyone trying to recover the four scores (elements) for their own purposes, good or ill.

Visually the film is a stunner, with some of the most beautiful effects realizations since *Cloud City* in *The Empire Strikes Back*. The cityscape with its hundreds of flying vehicles shooting around is very impressive, and everything is designed to look so cool.

The plot is sufficient, the pace of the movie good and the characters very appealing. The DC character can be a tad annoying, but you soon get used to him. Yea again Gary Oldman proves that he can look and sound totally different in every movie that he does. He pulls off his bad guy persona with ease.

It's nice to see a movie that uses a lot of underrated actors. Bruce Willis is the only big name in the film, but Holden is a joy to watch as ever, Brian James (Leon in *Blade Runner*) acts his part well (but he's getting a bit chubby), but Mills (Jennifer who plays Linnex (the Fifth Element) is superb and steals the show whenever she's on camera.

This is one of those films that, if you find it, you want to see it again straight away. And it loses nothing second time round. The only criticism I have is that the ending seems a little rushed, and possibly edited. Maybe we'll see a director's cut on Laserdisc or video, I sure hope so.



Uma looks the part, but she overdoes acting just plain sucks!

under some messy-haired crazy loon who wants to take over the world. When she discovers his plan, he tries to kill her by pushing her over into some equipment surrounded by poisonous plants.

Now just raise your head when things begin to get a bit familiar. Not content with dying, she rises from the glowing earth a transformed being, a super bad gal. If this all sounds like a very poor retask of Carverman then it's because it

THE LOST WORLD - JURASSIC PARK

I love the first movie. Whatever anyone else says, I think it's one of the most exciting and impressive films made in a long while. But I was worried that the sequel was going to be just a remake, and now the dinosaurs have been seen the impact may not be there anymore.

As far as the central core of the action is concerned, you it is the same. But Spielberg has managed to expand the story and come up with even more impressive action sequences. It's as though he sat down and said, for example,

"What's more frightening than a T-Rex attacking people? Ah, two T-Rex's attacking people!"

The graphics and general effects are absolutely superb as expected, with several new varieties of dino and loads more on screen and interacting all the time. However, you just don't get the same stunned astonishment as you did with Jurassic Park.

The storyline is less compelling than the original film and it does seem a little less 'solid'. The characters aren't as well developed, giving you less sympathy for them and their situation. Jeff Goldblum is as good as ever in his role as Ian Malcolm though, and his occasional quips and smart remarks help lighten the film

up considerably.

Elements of Spielberg's genius are apparent in places as usual, with some very memorable scenes, such as the trailer flapping over the edge of the cliff with Malcolm's girlfriend crawling across the cracking glass as the bomb that could plunge her to her doom.

Also the T-Rex storming through the city in the finale is quite a spectacle, although it looks strangely dwarfed by the buildings around it, and far less threatening.

If you disliked Jurassic Park, then you'll hardly get your kicks from The Lost World. It's nowhere near as good as the original, but still a visual treat and a brilliant movie in it's own right.



audio REVIEWS

— GAME MUSIC —

FINAL FANTASY VII - GRAND FINALE CAT: PSXN-1994 *

11 tracks * 34:22 mins

There is no missing this on the shelf - The cover is a bright red pencil drawing of an amalgam of creatures with a 'fair maiden' in the background. And not a single bit of text.

Anyway, this is an orchestral arrangement of music from FFXII. Unfortunately, I've never played it so any comparisons with the original music are out the window. Sorry.

First impressions are very good - The CD opens with a nice brooding piece (with some of the best and fullest sounding orchestration I've ever related soundtrack I've heard) and flows into what was probably the title theme - a

good tune with a

sublime hint of the

quirky heroic about it.

Track 2 is definitely

my fave - creeping

along quietly until it

reaches a resounding

finish, repeating itself a

few times for good

measure. The famous

Chocobo music crops

up in track 5, albeit

overshadowed around a bit.

The rest of the music is

competently arranged, with a couple of

solo violins pushing the feel of the CD

to the side of classical music. This is

further reinforced by the operatic final



track. Now I'm not a big fan of operas or anything, but this is professionally sung and very pleasant to listen too - and shows just how serious the Japanese take their game music.

All in all, if you like a combination between movie music and classical, then I can recommend this without hesitation.

— ANIME SOUNDTRACKS —

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR VOL. 1

ANIMANGA
CAT: AMN * 16 tracks *
46:13 mins

Released on the Animanga label, making it widely available in shops like Virgin and FIVE. KOLW. It is the first of three CDs of music from the highly acclaimed fantasy anime series, unfortunately not yet available in the UK.

It is for the most part orchestral, and has a fuller sound so it that you would expect from an anime TV series, for example. As far as the composition goes,

it's generally what you can expect from the average competent anime OST. The tracks are good enough without being

stunning, and it is more listenable than a

lot of big movie music.

There are two songs mixed in, both with female vocals, and both inoffensive enough not to disrupt the flow of the CD. It's a good disc for casual listening and although you may not want to rush out immediately and buy it, I doubt that you'd regret it if you did.

PLEASE SAVE MY EARTH ANIMANGA

CAT: AMN * 16 tracks * 44:57 mins

From the title, and cover of this CD you may well expect a quiet, gentle selection of music, and you'd be dead right so it starts off with a lovely Elysian song, a delight to listen to, and continues to use vocals effectively

throughout.

'A Song

Without A

Song'

stands out

as one of

the best

tracks. It is

a little out

of the

ordinary,

but original

and

powerful in

places.

Most of the more quiet soundtracks fall into the trap of being quite bland, but

Please Save My Earth is atmospheric and

original enough, with a select few tracks

that enhance the mood. In short, it's

lovely. If you like Elysian, or just fancy

something that you can relax to, then

you can't go far wrong with this.





RETRO GAMING

Captain Rover Powerstrong. There's a name from the past. A dog in a full-blown space helmet, this was the main character in *Star Power*, a very popular game by Software Projects. It first surfaced on the Commodore 64 and went on to be converted quite well to the Spectrum. The main aim of *Star Power* was the Roadrunner-esque task of catching a number of very fast, running birds. To do this, you had to be very cautious because running straight at them only caused them to peg it at high speed! Instead, a careful mix of moving towards and away was needed until you were in the perfect position to smack the fire buttons and nifty noddle them to the ground.

The graphics in *Star Power* were great, with loads of text and smooth parallax scrolling, and the playing area divided into a red lunar surface and miles below-ground. It is the most memorable thing about the game was the classic Rob Hubbard music, which must have been ripped and used by every demo group going! *Stinking Soft*.

Speaking of brilliant music on the 64 (of which there was a lot), *Scornland* had some stunning tunes but none more so than the title music. With impressive samples bells and speeds (this is *Scornland*) and one of the finest tunes in existence, this was almost worth the price of the game alone.

If I may change track and go onto arcade games a minute, there's a shout 'em up by Iron (I think) that I just can't recall the name of. You played a segmented dragon, complete with R-Type style beam laser and little man sliding on top. When you flew down to the ground, the little man dismounted and you could run around picking up chips and shooting with your crossbow. You also had the ability, when controlling the dragon, to loop your tail around in a circle to protect yourself from flying bullets and the like. It was a horizontal blaster and was converted

quite well to the Amiga as one point. I'm sure it had the word 'Dragon' somewhere in the title so if you know please drop me a line so put me out of my misery.

And while I'm not on the subject, does anyone out there have any old Japanese game music CD's they want to sell? I'm after anything at all really, from original game BGM to arrange versions/perfect collections, although I'm more likely to go for any Sega or Falcom stuff. Please let me know at the address at the front of the mag.



Scornland on the Commodore 64. Some of the best sound in any

You know, it's nice to see the *Dracula*/Castlevania series will going strong. I always had a soft spot for these titles, especially for *Dracula X* on the PC Engine CD-ROM. This was a truly fantastic piece of software that showed off the Engine. Konami had really sorted themselves out with some very clever parallax scrolling and beautifully drawn graphics. The best thing about it was that the levels were split into two different routes, so if you got stuck on one, you could try the other instead! It meant that you could complete the game without seeing everything, but the compulsion to go back and get 100% was so strong that you had to try.

It was a bit tricky in some places but it was worth the effort. The music was smart too - some excellent arrangements of the familiar old tunes, and there were some great surprises, like when a huge running vampire wolf smashed through a wall and started chasing you! Yikes!

With Sonic. I'm out in Japan, the little blue guy could well be coming back into fashion. But out of all the originals, which was the best? The Master System version. I'm not kidding either, it really was the best known, and from the gameplay point of view, it trounced the Mega Drive version into the ground.

For a start, the levels were far more varied, with some auto-scrolling up or across. The Mega Drive version suffered from a lack of variety and levels that were far too long in places. Not so on the Master System. One of the stages that sticks in my mind was the final one,

where you were up in the sky on Robotnik's airship or something. You had to leap about very carefully, avoiding huge electricity surges tapping all around you. This was a level that required top platform skills and was far more exciting and intense than it's 16-bit brother.

Another plus point was that the Master System music was done by some other than Yuzo Koshiro, the genius behind the Super (Kavango of) Shovel.

Bene (Bene of) Rags) Knuckle and Acornian soundtracks. Even though the Master System's poor little sound chip can't compare, the tunes were far more catchy. It's well worth going on the cheap if you can find it.

Here's a question. Whatever happened to *Power Drift* on the Mega Drive? It was announced quite early on in the life of the machine and I was looking forward to it for ages, but it just never happened. Not even a single sound chip shot, sure. It would have been a nightmare to convert, but they managed it fairly well on the PC Engine.

Dynastix Dux was another one that didn't come out on the Mega Drive, which is a pity as it was a decent game. Did you know that the music was the last to be done for Sega by Hiro? I point this out because he was the God of arcade tunes in the mid 80's with a CV that couldn't fail to impress. Hang On, Space Harrier, Out Run, Indiana Buzzer, Fantasy Zone, After Burner, Power Drift and Dynastix Dux.

This guy did all the classical if anyone knows what he's doing now, please let me know.

As this is a Star Wars issue, I suppose I'd better go over some of the games that have been around over the years. I'll skip the NES stuff and go straight to the first Star Wars game that I played - Atari's wireframe arcade version. This has remained a favourite throughout the years and I'll always throw some money in if I see it anywhere.

It took the form of an X-Wing cockpit view as you attacked the Empire's dreaded Death Star. The first stage consisted of blasting Tie fighters out in space, the second was an assault across the Death Star surface (including gun towers) and the third was the classic trench run. It was great fun, and you got a lot of satisfaction from seeing the Death Star explode in a flash of light. The music was brilliant and there was tons of speech, quite rare in those days.

The Empire Strikes Back arcade game followed in the same vein, allowing you to hang down AT-ATs with your tow cable (great!). But the Jedi one-up was totally different. This time they opted for an isometric view, with the player

guiding a speeder bike or the Millennium Falcon up the screen, shooting things and avoiding trees and piners

which was almost identical to the original.

Empire too had some great tunes, and the settings of the movie made for a visual treat. Gameplay had become harder and simpler though, with a passsword system to help you along.

By the time Jedi came out it was getting a bit tired. The gameplay was just running and blasting with very little skill involved. The final level was great fun but tricky, with almost no concentration needed to pilot the Falcon out of the Death Star insanity.

About a year after I was wishing someone would do a polygon-updated version of the original arcade game, someone did a polygon-updated version of the original arcade game. It was Sega this time and the total 3D graphics gave

it a superb visual feel. The Star Destroyers looked massive and skimming across their surfaces was excellent fun. It was followed by a good but hard

conversion for the final 3DX, but due to a lack of texture mapping it now looks pretty drab.



etc. I never really liked this one as it was way too hard. I couldn't get off the first level!

In more recent years, the SNES was blessed with the Star Wars license in a series of side-on platform games. The first one was notable for its incredibly faithful music, especially the Jawa tune

Tokyo Fan ISSUE ONE STILL AVAILABLE

THE WORLD OF CHINDOGU - USELESS INVENTIONS
ANIME GAMES ON THE PC ENGINE
HIROSHIMA PEACE PARK IN JAPAN
REVIEWS OF SEXY PARODIUS, DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 AND MORE!
PATLABOR 2 SOUNDTRACK, YUZO KOSHIRO'S HISTY BLUE
AND MORE SPACE-FILLERS THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK INSET AT!

BETTER THAN A CASE OF CRABS

